FAITHFUL AND TRUE

University Heights Presbyterian Church,

New York City.

Sermon by the

Rev. Percy B. Wightman, D. D., Pastor,

October 23, 1921,

In Memory of Mrs. Eliza Rogers Solomon,

(Eliza Rogers Ward)

Subject: "Communion of the Saints."

COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS.

The subject of my discourse today, "Saints and their communion with each other," and the Master leads my thoughts to one who was with us when we last gathered together, but who since has been called, to use the Lord's words, "to eat bread new in the Kingdom of Heaven". I refer to our loving friend and fellow-member, Mrs. Eliza Rogers Solomon, who was the oldest of us all and the youngest. Her spirit, life, faith and achievements deserve, it seems to me, more than a passing consideration.

She was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Dec. 7, 1829. Had she lived four months more her age would have reached 92 years. Her father Edmund Ward, for years the Queen's printer of the Colonies, a man of large interest and influence.

She was married when twenty-five years of

age, April 25, 1854, William Lemon Solomon, who was Postmaster General of Newfoundland until his death in 1861 (Oct. 10th). Thereafter she made her home in New York City, at first in East 51st Street, then down in the forties, and Harlem the year the Elevated was built, which was in 1879. Two years after she united with the Pilgrim Congregational Church by letter, and with this Church, its life and work, she was identified until her membership was transferred here (Jan. 23, 1915) six years ago. She entered into rest Aug. 19, 1921, very peacefully, reminding one of Enoch who was no longer "for God took him."

Her life appears to be one long record of service. The ladies of the Guild will remember a reception tendered Mrs. Solomon on her 90th birthday. After a gift and presentation speech, she responded. Something suggested

the first benevolent interest of her life, where she obtained her first start in working for others. It took place when she was a widow and then living in the forties. Dr. John Campbell's wife dying, she became one of the managers of the Female Assistant Society of New York City for the sick poor. This society first formed in 1812 to assist the widows and children of the War of 1812. At that time she was the youngest of twenty-five ladies, and the city was divided into districts for the giving out of coal, clothing, groceries, and 50c.a week for confinement cases. Her district was from 40th to 50th St. and Eighth Ave. to the Hudson. She remained until it was disbanded and the Charter revoked, for about 52 years.

From then on she was always active in banevolent work. Her consuming interest was

in the Chinese and was awakened in Pilgrim church which conducted one of the few Chinese Schools, the 8th for this people in our city. She became a teacher and their superintendent for 25 years, teaching the Bible in English and the Christian Faith. Her acquaintance grew in her twenty-eight years of teaching these people, visiting them in laundries, and homes, and following them in their married lives and wanderings.

There was one young man that looked upon her as a mother, by name Yong T Park. He was a man of ability and position. He studied in America. A new church was built in Nin Pin, China, and Mrs. Solomon said that it was his duty as a Chinese Christian to return to his own native land and preach there, and if he would go she would guarantee his salary of $15, American, per month. For twenty years

she was true to her promise, soliciting from friends and giving liberally herself. After he went as pastor of the Hong Kong Cong. Church. She continued his salary until a few years ago, when the church became independent and out of debt.

This love for the Chinese people gave her an acquaintance and friendship wider than is enjoyed by any other native American in our city. The last day but one before taking to her bed, a week before her death, was one which would tire out countless women half her age. It began, after the home duties, with a visit to the dentist. Then she started for Brooklyn, to visit an old friend, Mrs. Augur, but stopped on the way, getting off at Pell St. to see some Chinese and their babies. As they lived up five flights she had them brought to her, and held and fondled them

as she talked with the elders. After further going about, home was reached and she owned up to being tired. She was known as Grandmother to the Chinese young men and women of the city, and a great grandmother she was to them.

The many eulogies on her life and character that have come from friends who knew her spirit and worth best, I cannot give in their entirety. One writes, and he was loved by her as a small boy and later prescribed for her as one of our city's able physicians and surgeons:

"Her's was a life of wonderful value. Her gentle ways combined with her strong will and keen inteligence carried her over difficulties that few of us are able to surpass. And in her great work among the Chinese, these characteristics made her more powerful for good than any one else who was interested in these people." (F. O. Virgin M. D.) Another wrote:

"She was blessed with physical and mental health to the last. She was a beautiful strong character and we might add, joyful Christian. (Mrs. Seabury Cone Mastick.)

When the Chinese learned of her death the wires became busy. A Chinaman is constant, makes friends with difficulty and never gives up. They came to attend the service, leaving, everything, to show their love and veneration for one who did them good. As one wrote, out of the fullness of his heart: "I am very, very sorry to have missed Grandmother because she is faithfulness, hope, God bless her and give her glory and comfort for ever and ever. Please don't worry God take care of Grandmother." A. Chin Tong.

Most of us know the late Robert J. Burdette as a humorist, but the people of Los Angeles knew him as a tender, earnest preacher.

Eight years ago he felt that the sands in his hour glass of life were running low and so re-resigned his charge. Instead of preaching a farewell sermon there was distributed a booklet containing his message, and I think of the last paragraph in it. Let me quote:

"The shadows are deepening around the pond and the stream is singing itself to sleep. But there is yet a little grist in the hopper, and by the time the sun is down, and the flow in the race is not enough to turn the big wheel, the grist will have run out, and I will have the old mill swept and tidied for the night, and then for home and a cheery evening, a quiet night, lighted with stars and pillowed with sleep. And after that the dawning, and another day, fairer than any I have ever seen in this beautiful world of roseate mornings and radiant sunsets."

"For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee, by faith, before the world confessed,
They name, O Jesus, be forever blest,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

A FEW OF MANY TRIBUTES FROM FRIENDS.

Miss Charlotte Chambers Hall, Assistant Superintendent and Founder of the Chinese Sunday School of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church New York City, writes upon receiving a picture of Mrs. Solomon, reading into it the rich character: "It speaks graciousness and Christ-likeness. It speaks a rare intelligence which she cultivated and consecrated to His glory. it speaks human sympathy with those who came to her, sympathy with Christ in his desire for souls. It speaks appreciation of the virtues in others. it speaks fellowship with her fellow workers."

In another letter Miss Hall wrote at length: "So many times I think of her at our Chinese Mission, "A mother in Israel" to these strangers in a strange land. Many whom she brought to Christ directly and indirectly are

with the Lord of Glory. I seem to see through the veil and glimpse her radiant face "not changed but glorified," greeting the redeemed Chinese and bringing those whom they in turn led to Christ. And on and on through endless years will the influences she set in motion make her soul gladder and gladder in heaven. I remember her when she was superintendent of the Chinese Sunday School of Dr. Samuel Virgin's church, Madison Ave. and 121st St. How she was beloved. She was a gifted, cultured, able servant of the Lord, wise and faithful and devoted to His service always."

J. Franklin Dunseith, M. D., her physician for twenty years wrote: "I often think of her and her amiable qualities with the satisfaction of knowing what a heaven on earth this world would be, if the majority of our fellows were like her."

Dr. Clarence H. Wilson, as retiring president of the Congregational Club, at the first meeting in November, 1921, addressed the members as follows:

Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen:

"I have been informed of the death of Mrs. Solomon, who was our oldest Pilgrim. The older members of the Club will recall vividly this sweet and gracious old lady who has been one of the regular attendants at the club dinners for many years. You will recall that at our meeting last December, it was mentioned that she had passed her ninety-first birthday and that the club gave her an enthusiastic greeting upon that occasion. You will recall also, I am sure, the pretty and graceful courtesy with which she returned the greeting."